

Remarks

Status of Claims

Claims 34, 39-42, 45, 46, and 48-51 are pending in the application. Claims 35-38, 43, 44, and 47 have been withdrawn. Claims 34, 39-42, 45, 46 and 48 stand rejected. Claims 49-51 stand objected to.

Specification

In the specification, previously added terminology has been amended to further clarify and point out the claimed invention. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 49-51.

Drawing Objections

The Examiner has objected to drawings Figs. 7-16 under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner contends that the features of claim 42 are not shown in Figs. 7-16 and must be shown or cancelled. Claim 42 has been amended to further clarify the present invention. As amended, claim 42 recites the plug connection of claim 34, wherein the second plug is provided with a sealing projection configured for engagement with the sealing member. The Examiner's attention is directed to review page 17, lines 4-10 of the substitute Specification, in light of Figure 7 and 8, which clearly show a sealing projection 198, which is configured to form an air tight joint with the sealing members that are first introduced in lines 7-14 of page 16 of the

substitute Specification. Since the claimed features are clearly shown, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to the amendment filed on March 4, 2009 under 35 U.S.C § 132(a), asserting that the amendment introduces new matter. Specifically, the Examiner points out that added material is not supported by the original disclosure, including the features “partition seal”, “bearing sealing member” and “passageway sealing member” in the replaced paragraphs [0004], [0006], [0007], [0009], [0010], [0011], [0018], and [0019], asserting that the features were not originally disclosed in the specification and the considered new matter.

The Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s assertion that the features added in the amendment, filed March 4, 2009, constitute new matter, considering that the features are well supported in the in the original disclosure.

The feature “partition seal” is the peripheral seal 28, which is used top seal the first plug 1 from the partition wall 37 (see paragraph [0053] of the Printed publication). Although the Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s findings, the Applicants amend the specification to more clearly point out the claimed invention. As a result, the feature “partition seal” now recites “a seal positioned at a partition wall”. Any further recitation of the feature “partition seal” has been amended to the feature “seal”.

Accordingly, the feature “bearing sealing member” has been amended to recite the feature “sealing member”, although the Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s findings. The Applicants amend the specification to more clearly point out the claimed invention, and define the area where the “sealing member” is positioned. Any further recitation of the feature “bearing

“sealing member” has been amended to the feature “sealing member positioned on a bearing projection” or the like.

The feature “passageway sealing member” has been amended to recite the feature “sealing member”. The Applicants amend the specification to more clearly point out the claimed invention, and define the area where the “sealing member” is positioned. In accordance with the invention, openings 72, 73 are provided in the first plug housing 2 through which the pin-like projections 33, 34 dip so as to cooperate with the sliding device 704, as shown in Fig. 7. The openings 72, 73 are provided with peripheral sealing members 163 in order to seal this connection region and prevent the penetration of moisture into the interior of the first plug 1. Any further recitation of the feature “passageway sealing member” has been amended to the feature “sealing member”.

Claim Rejections

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, first ¶

The Examiner has rejected claims 34, 39-42, 45, 46, and 48-51 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The Examiner asserts that the newly added features “partition seal”, “bearing sealing member arranged in a connection region” in claims 34 and 45; “passageway sealing member” in claims 40 and 42 are all confusing and unclear since such features were not originally disclosed in the specification and considered new matter.

The Applicants disagree with the Examiner's findings that the newly added features constitute new matter, considering that the newly added features found support in the written description and drawing, as supported above. However, the Applicants have amended claims in order to more particularly point out the claimed invention. Specifically, claims 34, 40, 42, 45, and 46 have been amended to require structure written in the original disclosure. As discussed above, the newly added features have been replaced with language indicated in the original disclosure.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 34, 39-42, 45, 46, and 48 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,183,275 issued to Okura et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Okura").

With reference to claim 34, the Examiner asserts that Okura discloses, citing Figures 1-5, a plug connection, comprising a first plug 20 having a seal 27, a second plug 10 configured for fitting in an opening H in a partition wall P, the second plug being mateable with the first plug such that the seal substantially surrounds the opening in the partition wall when the first and second plugs are mated, and a clamping device 24, 23, 31 provided on the first plug that is configured for drawing the first plug into engagement with the second plug, the clamping device engaging with the second plug at a connection region where the cover 23, 24 engaged with the hood member 13, the connection region being provided with a sealing member 16 configured to seal the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug. The Examiner then asserts that any differences between the present invention and the teachings of Okura would be an obvious modification since such changes solve no stated problems.

As discussed, claim 34 has been amended to further clarify the present invention.

Amended claim 34 requires a plug connection, comprising a first plug having a seal and a first plug housing with at least one opening in the first plug housing, a second plug configured for fitting in an opening in a partition wall, the second plug being mateable with the first plug such that the seal substantially surrounds the opening in the partition wall when the first and second plugs are mated, and a clamping device provided on the first plug that is configured for drawing the first plug into engagement with the second plug, the clamping device engaging with the second plug through each opening in the first plug housing at a connection region, the connection region being provided with a sealing member arranged in the connection region and configured to seal each opening in the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug.

In the least, Okura does not teach nor suggest a plug connection having first plug having *a seal positioned to seal at a partition wall and at least one sealing member* arranged in the connection region and configured to seal each opening in the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug. While the Examiner points to Okura's sealing member 16, that sealing member is not configured to seal a connection region as defined by claim 34, especially configured to seal openings formed on the first plug housing. The connection region of claim 34 is defined at a location where the clamping device engages with the second plug. Okura's sealing member 16, in contradistinction, only seals the second plug on the panel and does not seal his connection region 28, 29. The clamping device in the present invention alleviates any problems such that moisture can penetrate at joints between the clamping device and the plugs, which can lead to failure of the plug connection. Okura does not discuss any solutions to this problem. Accordingly, claim 34 cannot be obvious in light Okura, nor those that

depend therefrom, namely claims 39-42, 45, 46 and 48. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is requested.

Conclusion

For all of the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, the Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, reconsideration and allowance of claims 34, 39-42, 45, 46, and 48-51 and issuance of a Patent for the subject invention. If the Examiner cares to discuss anything presented here to further prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact the undersigned Attorney for the Applicants. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 501581.

Respectfully submitted,

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